

Army's newest top soldier visits Bagram

Story and photo by Sgt. Greg Heath
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Soldiers got a first look at their newest boss, Gen. Peter Schoomaker, the 35th Army Chief of Staff, yesterday when he visited Bagram Air Base. The visit was part of his tour of Afghanistan.

For Schoomaker, his trip was an opportunity to personally get reacquainted with some of his soldiers serving on the frontlines of the Global War on Terrorism.

Schoomaker came out of retirement Aug. 1 to take on the position as the highest-ranking Army officer, after he had originally retired from the Army in 2000



More than a hundred soldiers and coalition service members gathered to see the Army's newest Chief of Staff, Gen. Peter Schoomaker, visit Bagram Air Base Aug. 18.

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Calling in the Cavalry, scouts arrive in Kandahar

Story and photo by Spc C. Elijah Spencer
211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Kandahar Air Field received a new breed of soldiers, when the first cavalry scout unit in the history of Operation Enduring Freedom stepped off of a plane and on to Afghanistan soil.

When the soldiers of 3rd Platoon, Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cav. Regiment, based out of Fort Drum N.Y., arrived in Kandahar their imagination quickly became a reality. No more time to wonder “what if?” The time was now. Despite a couple of bumps in the road on the way, the troops’ journey here was rather painless.

“The [overall] pace getting here was pretty good,” said Sgt. 1st Class Leonard S. Kacuba, the platoon sergeant of 3rd Platoon, “everything went a lot better than I thought,

even the camp here is better than I imagined, they are doing a really good job here.”

The unit arrived in Kandahar about a week ago and is waiting for their equipment and vehicles. In the mean time, they have been conducting dismounted exercises, such as house clearing, patrols, and reacting to enemy contact.

“We have to be prepared for anything at anytime, whether it be on our vehicles or off. That’s why we do these exercises”, said 2nd Lt. John A. Torrealba from Goshen, N.Y.

Torrealba, who has recently completed Reserve Officer Training Course at the University of New York at Albany, was assigned to 3rd Platoon two and a half months ago. But, he is sure of the performance of his unit.

“I have full confidence in my team”, said Torrealba. “They were a fully functional, well-oiled machine when I got here. I feel rather fortunate to be assigned to them. This is more

than I ever could have hoped for or wanted in my first platoon.”

The majority of the unit has been together for a year and a half and most of them are within their first two years of active duty. However, the vast experience possessed by the cadre of senior noncommissioned officers more than compensates for the inexperience among the junior enlisted.

“It simply blows me away when I think about the fact that Sgt. Kacuba was out on missions in Panama when I was just in the third grade,” said Spc. Ryan J. Miller. “I wouldn’t prefer it to be any other way, and he is definitely the type of guy you want to be with in combat.”

Despite the fact that most of the enlisted personnel are in their late teens to early

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



"Rose" was found in a locked metal box along with knives and AK47s.

Troops find baby in weapons cache

BASRA, Iraq – British soldiers have saved the life of a baby girl after finding her in a padlocked box in a weapons cache in Basra, the Ministry of Defence said.

Entering a house during a weapons search in the southern Iraqi port city Sunday, Pvt. Damien Kenny, 18, and Pvt. Jonathan Hunt, 21, found a 3-foot-long locked metal box.

When they opened it, they found the baby, barely two days old, wrapped in a blanket and lying among rocket-propelled grenade launchers, AK47s, ammunition, knives and bayonets.

"We were expecting to find weapons hidden in the box," Kenny said. When they saw the baby was no longer breathing, the privates began mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

"We couldn't believe it when we saw it was a baby girl, and we had to try something. ... We thought she would not recover until I felt her squeeze my finger," Kenny said.

The soldiers also found the baby's mother, who identified her daughter. They are now both being cared for in a hospital, where the baby is said to be "safe and well."

"It is unclear why the child had been placed in the locked container, although it has been established that the baby had been born prematurely," a spokesman at the British command center in Basra said.

It is thought she had been inside the box for at least 10 minutes.

"We followed it up and the mother has actually said that it was the father who put

the young child inside the ammunition box," said Lt. Craig Rogers, who commanded the unit that found the baby, *The Associated Press* reported.

The father was arrested, Rogers told London radio station LBC.



An anti-U.S. demonstrator ties a flower to a cloth in front of riot police near the U.S. military's main headquarters in South Korea.

Shots at sea risk to Korean talks

BELJING – South Korea has fired warning shots at a boat from North Korea, according to the defense ministry in Seoul.

Shots were fired Monday to drive back a vessel that was violating the South's territorial waters in the Yellow Sea, South Korean officials said. No casualties were reported.

The incident comes just nine days ahead of scheduled six-nation talks in Beijing on North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

North Korea's official news agency appeared to be standing firm ahead of the talks, repeating Monday it could not dismantle its nuclear deterrent force if the United States did not abandon its "hostile policy" toward Pyongyang.

The official KCNA news agency demanded Washington sign a non-aggression pact with North Korea, establish diplomatic ties and make clear it would not hinder Pyongyang's foreign trade.

"If the U.S. does not express its will to make a switchover in its policy towards the DPRK the DPRK will have no option but to declare that it cannot dismantle its nuclear deterrent force at the talks," KCNA said. DPRK are the initials for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The talks between North Korea, the United States, China, Russia, Japan and

South Korea are set to start on August 27.



The second shooting occurred August 14 at a Speedway gas station on Charleston's south side.

Investigators question 100 people in sniper-like killings

CHARLESTON, West Virginia – Investigators in the killings of three people at Charleston-area gas stations last week are questioning 100 people they consider suspects in those shootings, Kanawha County Sheriff Dave Tucker said Monday.

"We have 100 suspects at this time, and they're being interviewed as we speak now," Tucker told reporters Monday afternoon.

Twelve teams made up of local law enforcement authorities and some federal agents are working on making contact with all of the 100 suspects, a law enforcement source told *CNN*.

Investigators are also looking for a dark-colored, possibly maroon, full-sized pickup, Tucker said. But law enforcement officials said the truck, perhaps a Ford F-150, is common in the West Virginia mountains, noting that Charleston Mayor Danny Jones and at least two police officers drive such a truck.

The law enforcement source said investigators are checking motor vehicle records to find names of people who drive similar trucks.

The source also said that as part of the investigation, authorities have checked the backgrounds of the three victims and found that they all attended the same high school, although not at the same time.

It's not known if this is a significant clue or just a coincidence, the source said.

Tucker said his Kanawha County deputies are trying to avoid "tunnel vision" in their probe. He said his agency is receiving assistance from some of the investigators in last year's sniper attacks in the Washington, D.C., area.

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twenties, the unit promotes an atmosphere of seriousness and maturity when on the job; and nothing is as important as the team and getting the job done.

“What we do is very important,” said Spc. Isaac M. Leal. “We are the eyes and ears of the Army on the battlefield and that’s not exactly a job that you want to play around with. Other soldiers are depending on us to ensure that the Army is never caught on their heels.”

“We have been used to do many different things in other areas around the world like peace keeping missions in Kosovo. But, this is the first time since I’ve been in the unit that we have actually been deployed to do just what we do best and I think that’s cool,” said Leal, referring to the cavalry scout mission here.

“I think it’s about time,” said Torrealba, “I sure didn’t join the Army to just sit around at my desk all day filling out paperwork.”

The unit has much to live up to due to the fact that they are the first of their kind to step foot on Afghan soil. The usual routine is to meet up with the soldiers that



Elements of the 3rd Plt., Trp. A, 3rd Sqdn., 17th Cav. Regt. perform dismount exercise.

have been here for a while and perform a Replacement In Progress or RIP. However, there are no cavalry scout platoons here to show them the ropes and allow them to get accustomed to the atmosphere, so they are on their own and making their own tracks.

“I guess we’re kind of like guineas pigs right now, but it doesn’t bother me at all,” said Miller.

“This gives us the opportunity to prepare for the worst and learn as we go, so that we can set the standard for other units like us that will come in the future,” said Leal.

Dolphins help Navy defend gulf from attacks

Story by Lt. Josh Frey
5th Fleet Public Affairs

MANAMA, Bahrain — With terrorist attacks like that against USS Cole (DDG 67) in October 2000 still a very real possibility, the U.S. Navy has a new ally in the global war on terrorism — the Mk 6 anti-swimmer dolphin system.

Much more than your typical Sea World entertainers, these dolphins are dedicated Navy sailors, standing watch over Arabian Gulf ports and deterring uninvited guests seeking to harm ships and ports. With swimmer defense experience dating back to Vietnam, the Navy’s Mk 6 dolphins are ready to deploy any time, anywhere.

“It is reassuring to know that we can put our anti-swimmer dolphins where we need them rapidly and successfully, in order to protect our Sailors, ships and high value assets,” said Lt. Cmdr. Martin Anderson, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command’s Special Operations branch officer. “These dolphins and their handlers provide a valuable capability, by guarding U.S. and coalition ships and piers in the waters of not only the Arabian Gulf, but throughout 5th Fleet waters.”

Taking over from the Sea Lion Shallow Water Intruder Detection System, the dolphins, operated by Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)

Mobile Unit 3, provide significant operational force protection capabilities to the 5th Fleet theater. The Navy’s selection of bottlenose dolphins and California sea lions for its operational systems is based on a variety of factors, one of the most important of which is their ability to work comfortably and effectively in a wide variety of environments.

“They’re able to adapt rapidly, and their biological sonar is very effective,” said Naval Space and Warfare (SPAWAR) representative, Mark Yates, referring to the mammals’ special natural adaptations, such as an efficient hydrodynamic shape, and a very effective natural sonar system that can transmit and receive sound waves.

“The adaptations make the animals valuable partners in detecting threat swimmers,” added Sonar Technician (Submarines) 1st Class Dan Cook of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 3. “Hardware-based systems have limitations that the dolphins make up for naturally, which helps them discriminate between objects and swimmers. This is particularly helpful in high noise environments, such as harbors and bays.”

“We used the data from the sea lions, as well as data from previous marine mammal deployments to the Texas Gulf Coast, to develop climate controlled facilities for the mammals and enhance warm water operations,” explained SPAWAR veterinarian Cynthia Smith. “They have quickly acclimated to operate effectively.”

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after 31 years of service.

Upon arriving at Bagram, Schoomaker addressed more than one hundred soldiers and coalition service members that gathered outside of the Combined Joint Task Force headquarters to greet him.

"It's important for (Schoomaker) to be here to show that he cares and to find out what's going on personally with the soldiers," said CJTF-180 CJ3 Sgt. Maj. Sonny Mitchell. "You can't do it over a telephone or Video Teleconference."

During his talk to service members Schoomaker said there was one main reason for coming out of retirement to take on this new assignment.

"There was absolutely no question in my mind to come back on active duty when asked to do so ... and it's because of you all," he said to the soldiers in attendance. "It's not anything about money or any of that stuff; it's about knowing what's right, one's sense of duty."

For Spc. Daryl Keith, 35th Sig. Bde., having the top Army soldier visit was a big morale booster.

"It feels good to have the highest-ranking soldier come over and show his personal gratitude to the soldiers," he said.

Mitchell agreed, "He is showing that he supports us and giving us a chance to show we're going to support him as our new boss."

While speaking to the troops, Schoomaker added that he was proud of what they had achieved all over the world while fighting the war on terrorism, but admitted that the fight was far from over.

"This is going to go on for a long time and I'm not just talking about here in Afghanistan," Schoomaker said. "It's a different world now and we're going to have to be to do what's necessary to stand up for our way of life and our world in the future, and it's going to take people like you willing to stand between harm and our homelands to do that."

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly." Three gunmen set out to find a hidden fortune. Who will walk away with the cash?



Tomorrow's movie will be "A Knight's Tale."

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Wednesday
Bagram:	Dusty H: 97F L: 72F	Partly cloudy H: 97F L: 72F
Kandahar:	Dusty H: 106F L: 77F	Dusty H: 106F L: 77F
Kabul:	Dusty H: 97F L: 64F	Dusty H: 95F L: 64F
Uzbekistan:	Clear H: 101F L: 58F	Clear H: 101F L: 60F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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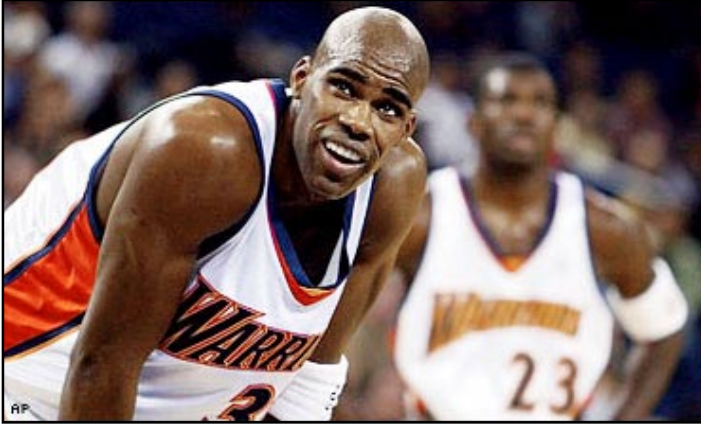
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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *ESPN.com*)



Antawn Jamison averaged 22.2 points per game last season.

Trading Places, Jamison headed to Dallas

DALLAS — The Dallas Mavericks finally made a major offseason move, acquiring Antawn Jamison in a nine-player trade with the Golden State Warriors.

The Mavericks also got Danny Fortson, Jiri Welsch and Chris Mills from the Warriors for Nick Van Exel, Avery Johnson, Evan Eschmeyer, Popeye Jones and Antoine Rigadeau.

The 6-foot-9 Jamison has averaged 20.2 points a game in his five NBA seasons, and has been the Warriors' top scorer the past four seasons.

Van Exel was the Mavericks' leading scorer off the bench last season. During the playoffs, when Dallas advanced to the Western Conference finals before losing to San Antonio, Van Exel averaged 19.5 points.

After getting to the Western Conference finals last season, the Mavericks weren't able to land any big-name free agents. San Antonio, Sacramento and the Los Angeles Lakers, the other top teams in the conference, had all already moves to upgrade their rosters.

Dotson placed on suicide watch

CHESTERTOWN, Md. — Former Baylor basketball player Carlton Dotson, still in a Maryland jail awaiting an extradition hearing after being charged with the murder of former teammate Patrick Dennehy, spent the weekend under a suicide watch after guards found him nude and hurling objects out of his cell, *The Washington Post* reported Monday.

"For his protection, he's sleeping on paper sheets," Dotson's attorney, Grady Irvin Jr., told the newspaper.

"My hope is that my client will not find himself the fall guy. The only thing that I can hope for is that Carlton will be competent enough some day to piece all of this together to tell his side of the story, clear up a very muddy picture and bring focus to those who have been able to avoid detection."

Interviews with Dotson's friends and family members in Hurlock, Md., reveal that Dotson has displayed behavior consistent with mental illness since returning from Baylor around June 15, according to the *Post*. Those interviewed have said Dotson spoke of having acquired special powers, of hearing voices and of wrestling with demons in his room at night, pointing to bloody wounds on his skin the next day as proof.

Dotson, through his attorney, and case investigators declined to comment when reached by the *Post*. Dotson will appear Tuesday before a judge who will eventually determine if he must return to Texas to face murder charges, the *Post* reported.

Dennehy's former girlfriend, Jessica De La Rosa, told the newspaper that Dotson could be faking mental illness to avoid or lessen his punishment because of Texas' reputation for enforcing the death penalty.

"I don't think he's crazy," she said. "He might be crazy now, but I don't think he was crazy at the time."

In the month that Dotson has been jailed, family members, a prison guard and two ministers who have met with him frequently say he has displayed sharp mood swings.

"There's two Carlton Dotsons," the guard at the Kent County jail said in an interview with the *Post*. "One is a model prisoner who does everything you tell him and the other ... well, boy, he's out there."

Braves power past Diamondbacks

ATLANTA — Mike Hampton is pitching so well he doesn't even mind returning to Colorado.

Hampton won his eighth in a row, allowing only four hits in eight innings as the Atlanta Braves bounced back from a rare shutout with a 6-1 victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks on Monday.

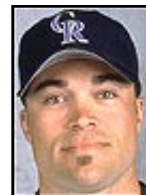
Robert Fick broke out of a slump with three RBI, Marcus Giles homered and drove in two runs, and Gary Sheffield extended his hitting streak to 22 games with a homer.

Hampton (11-5) is 8-0 over his last nine starts, but he's been especially dominant in the past three appearances. The left-hander followed his first complete game of the season with two straight eight-inning stints, surrendering just 12 hits and three earned runs in 25 innings.

"He's been lights out," Fick said. "He's turned it around, he's throwing strikes and he's getting a lot of groundballs. I wouldn't want to face him."

Hampton lowered his ERA to 4.04 — quite a change from last year. He had the highest ERA (6.15) among qualifying starters during the last of two miserable seasons with the Colorado Rockies.

His next start comes Saturday at Coors Field.



Mike Hampton

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Life is shades of beige at Afghanistan camp

By Wendy Solomon

BAGRAM, Afghanistan (*Morning Call*) — Time is not an easy concept at this desolate military base where every day feels like Groundhog Day. Not the holiday involving shadows and six more weeks of winter, but the movie, where life is a hell of eternally repetitive days.

Shadows are sparse and meager in this hot, hostile environment where even fire ants are locked in a Darwinian battle for survival of the fittest and winter is a far-off concept.

The days have been melting together for the soldiers of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 213th Area Support Group. The unit, spread over four bases, is more than two months into its job of helping to run and standardize services on the bases. For those who dare to count, the 213th soldiers have only five more months to go until they fly home to their Allentown headquarters, about 7,000 miles from this parched spot on the other side of the world.

Home for the 213th at Bagram Air Base is a series of rows of tents in a section of the base known as Camp Dragon, and where daytime temperatures inside the tent are as hot as dragon's breath. The winds kick up every day about 5 p.m., edging out the fetid air and whisking in a coating of fine brown dirt some have taken to calling dust. Sometimes the wind is so strong it shakes the wooden frames and beats the tents' canvas flaps, and great clouds of dirt swirl like whirligigs in the air.

The onset of evening brings out strange creatures. Camel spiders are frequent visitors in tents, and not always welcome ones. The hairy, fearsome-looking creatures resemble spiders, but are in fact harmless arthropods. That is usually little comfort to those who happen upon them. They have startled soldiers sitting outside their tents enjoying the temperate evening air.

Spc. Alicia Furst of Coopersburg recalls with some disdain the time she found one crawling on her bed with its four pairs of legs. And then it chased her.

"It wanted to get in your shadow," Spc. Shakeema Russ of Stroudsburg insisted.

It's true, the creatures seek out shadows and the faster you run, the faster they chase.

That chase ended when Spc. Corey Stockert killed the camel spider with the butt of his rifle.

Sometimes there are flickers of civilian life, such as the occasional rock concert or comedy show on the base. But it's never quite the same, especially when a rocket attack intrudes upon a good time, as happened in July.

There's no such thing as a weekend here, where anticipation builds for relief at the end of each interminable week, unless you long for Fridays when they serve lobster and crab legs for dinner. But after two months, even lobster is loathed.

Friday is also bazaar day on the base. That's when more than 50 Afghan vendors set up stalls to sell their wares to the 4,000 soldiers who live inside the base. Bearded men in turbans peer out from

awnings and beckon passersby to look at the carpets, antique weapons, alabaster chess sets, lapis stones or bootleg DVDs. "I'll make a deal just for you," they say.

Master Sgt. Susan Brown of Allentown was satisfied with a milky green alabaster tea set for less than \$20. Others hauled home handwoven wool carpets for less than \$300.

Spc. Nathan Kort, 24, of Northumberland County, revels in the new experience of being in a foreign country. U.S. troops, who ousted the Taliban regime nearly two years ago, are now helping to rebuild Afghanistan.

Once, in traveling "outside the wire," Kort wondered how the villagers in the small mud-brick homes purified stream water so they could drink it. A man pointed to the long shalwar kameez he wore, and said he poured the water through his tunic to catch the sediment.

Experiences like that confirm to Kort that joining the 213th for an opportunity to be deployed overseas was the right choice. He doesn't dismiss the hardships, such as the lack of modern amenities like running water, flush toilets and cable TV.

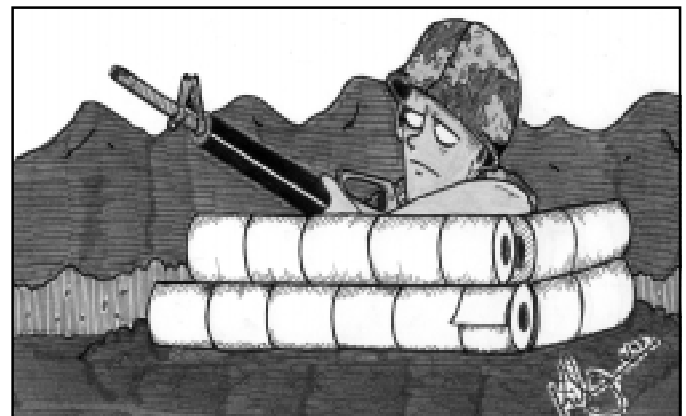
"If I were married, or I had a family," Kort said, "I don't think I'd volunteer for this."

Most days, the sun beats down mercilessly on those who walk back to their tents on Disney Drive. Traveling by foot is slow, cumbersome and hard on the body and boots, as it requires walking on gravel spread out over the base to tamp down the loose dirt.

For Kort, it's gotten to the point where he loses track of what day it is. On this day, he is seated behind a desk, checking IDs at the base operations building, where many of the 213th work.

"It's always Monday to me," he said.

"Government Issue toilet paper use #78."



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support